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**Section 4: Training Activity 1— Determining Levels of Independence**

Case Study: Jean .....	1
Case Study: Gabe .....	2
Case Study: Kenny .....	3
Case Study: Sara .....	4
Case Study: Nakisha .....	5
Case Study: Drew .....	6
Case Study: Jason .....	7
Case Study: Tim .....	8
Case Study: Jesse .....	9
Case Study: Ron .....	10
Case Study: Susan .....	11

## **CASE STUDY: JEAN**

1. An 18-year-old with cerebral palsy.
2. Walks short distances with aid of a walker, but generally uses motorized wheelchair for ambulating.
3. Attends a school program that focuses on community living.
4. Is currently employed part-time at a local fast food restaurant.
5. Plans to live alone in own house with occasional help from a personal assistant.
6. Independently operates a computer and e-mails peers and staff members.
7. Reads at second-grade level.
8. Uses picture cues to obtain meaning from print and uses newspaper for information.
9. Math skills are somewhat weak but improve with use of calculator.
10. Identifies all coins and their values, but is unable to compute the value of coins.
11. Independently contacts a personal assistant and/or arranges for public transportation by phone.
12. Expresses future vocational interests as well as a desire to increase work hours and accept additional assignments.
13. Loves to arrange outings with friends, such as going to a hockey game or movie.
14. Sometimes has poor hygiene and does not dress appropriately.
15. Has difficulty with judgment regarding social interactions.

## **CASE STUDY: GABE**

1. A 14-year-old freshman who lives at home.
2. Is in a special education classroom working on functional life skills and effectively communicating in daily activities.
3. Participates in two general education classes, typically art and physical education.
4. Is ambulatory and verbal, although speech is repetitive.
5. Often in the community with his family, but unable to travel independently.
6. Completes hygiene routines with prompting to begin.
7. When working, requires verbal prompting to complete tasks.
8. Has the most success when completing academic activities on the computer.
9. Does well in “assembly line” vocational situations that involve the completion of repetitive tasks.
10. Swims weekly at the local YMCA and actively participates in Special Olympics.
11. Participates in team sports with verbal prompts, but has no grasp of rules and routines.
12. Does not initiate social interactions during community transactions.
13. Frequently expresses desire to work with particular students he enjoys.
14. Does excellent job of finding appropriate activities during unstructured time at school.
15. If changes are not explained, he stops immediately and looks to adults for cues.

## **CASE STUDY: KENNY**

1. A 17-year-old high school student with cerebral palsy.
2. Requires physical assistance with personal needs and repositioning Dynavox augmentative communication system.
3. Directs caregivers who provide him with assistance.
4. Has no behavioral concerns and is quite popular.
5. Needs to better advocate for himself with peers, adults, and in leisure activities.
6. Plans to live on his own after graduation with limited physical assistance.
7. Recognizes his strengths and weaknesses.
8. Needs to persist in asking for time to respond to questions and/or requests.
9. Knows what career he wants to pursue.
10. Accesses computer keyboard with a head pointer to print assignments.
11. Students and teachers are amazed at his ability to invent adaptations and solve problems despite severe physical disability. The inventions testify to his ability to collect, store, and complete complex thought processes.
12. Plans trips for pleasure with friends and mother.
13. Moves around school without supervision.
14. Is working towards graduating so he can go to college.
15. Is making progress toward graduation, but is taking several years longer than the average student.

## **CASE STUDY: SARA**

1. A 10-year-old with spastic quadriplegia and cerebral palsy.
2. Has very little functional use of hands and arms.
3. Requires total assistance with daily living needs.
4. Has limited basic vocalizations that can be understood, in part, by caregivers.
5. Sometimes vocalizations are loud and disruptive.
6. Has very limited facial expressions (smiling) and communication skills.
7. Attends elementary school where she participates in the classroom, receives multiple therapies, and participates in leisure and community activities with classmates, staff, and family.
8. Participates in shopping, medical appointments, vacations, field trips, and leisure activities, but requires one-on-one assistance from a caregiver.
9. Caregivers push her wheelchair and care for her in the home and at school. (Both her home and school have wheelchair accommodations.)
10. Passively interacts with family, school bus drivers, school staff, and classmates mostly by smiling and using familiar vocalizations.
11. Educational programming emphasizes developing daily living and social skills.
12. Uses assistive communication devices and pictures to make choices.
13. Is working on not putting objects in mouth and not biting spoon, toothbrush, washcloth, or her right arm splint.
14. Needs total care for personal needs such as bathing, hygiene, eating, and dressing.
15. Will always need assistance with safety.

## **CASE STUDY: NAKISHA**

1. A 17-year-old who lives at home.
2. Receives instruction in a special education classroom.
3. Once directed, will participate in an activity with hand-over-hand assistance.
4. Attention span is very limited and at times refuses to participate.
5. Requires verbal prompting when greeting familiar people.
6. Smiles and conducts herself within social guidelines when others initiate interactions.
7. Community interactions are limited to times she accompanies parents on errands.
8. Is nonverbal and conveys desires, feelings, and needs primarily by changing facial expressions and vocalizations.
9. Requires ongoing, extensive support.
10. Follows a few one-step directions and requires gestural prompts to follow those that are new or two-step.
11. Learning basic manual communication but requires verbal prompts and hand-over-hand assistance to perform signs.
12. Needs assistance in grooming, health and safety routines.
13. Toileting skills are age appropriate, but staff members must direct her to the proper restroom.
14. Is ambulatory, has adequate gross motor skills, and moves through the school building with guidance.
15. Cognitive impairments do not allow her to generalize or transfer what she has been taught.

## **CASE STUDY: DREW**

1. A 13-year-old who lives at home.
2. Is short for age. Looks more like an 8-year-old than a teenager.
3. Favorite class is gym.
4. Can dress completely, although sometimes puts shirt on backwards.
5. Needs work tying shoes.
6. Bathes and brushes teeth independently, but needs to be reminded to wipe face after meals.
7. Is an independent eater, can cut food, but needs to work on eating neatly.
8. Enjoys being out in the community, but can be distracted by surrounding activities and does not always realize when it is his turn.
9. Understands that money is needed to purchase items, but has no concept of money values.
10. Has difficulty with numbers in terms of counting, values, and applications.
11. Has limited word recognition skills.
12. Communication pattern is limited to no more than 2 or 3 words at a time.
13. Is aware of what to do during a fire drill.
14. Manages unstructured time by playing with model cars, connecting blocks, reading books, and completing puzzles.
15. Will probably require some support throughout life.

## **CASE STUDY: JASON**

1. A nine-year-old enrolled in an elementary special education classroom.
2. Is able to make needs known to familiar adults by taking them to what he wants, initiating an activity, and/or using Boardmaker pictures.
3. Self-care skills are greatest strength.
4. Undresses himself and assists in putting clothes on.
5. Independently feeds himself and has appropriate table manners.
6. Needs to be toilet trained and tolerate having teeth brushed and face washed.
7. Needs supervision to insure safety.
8. Requires prompts to carry out work assignments.
9. Initiates and uses community playground facilities appropriately.
10. Advocates for himself when others attempt to take possessions.
11. Needs to learn to attend, participate, and carry out transactions in group activities.
12. Does not respond effectively to unexpected events or potentially harmful situations.
13. Effectively manages unstructured time.
14. Can count to ten and match similar quantities.
15. Reading ability limited to “sight” vocabulary.



## **CASE STUDY: TIM**

1. An 18-year-old enrolled in a secondary level special education classroom.
2. Is a paraplegic, lives at home with parents, and requires assistance with personal care.
3. Typically will not interact with peers but likes the attention of caregivers and familiar adults.
4. Needs to indicate when assistance is required and actively seek attention of staff without waiting to be approached.
5. Likes to work with items that have switches and buttons.
6. Interacts well with video games and tape decks.
7. A mostly nonverbal communicator, although makes a few utterances.
8. Uses an assistive device to facilitate communication.
9. Is working on increasing the number of icons he can recognize and independently operating or selecting an icon without cueing.
10. Switches between levels on communication board to access more icons.
11. Needs physical assistance with dressing and sometimes does not recognize the need for clothing.
12. Feeds himself finger foods and scoops prepared foods.
13. Can drink from a glass but is working on opening/pouring containers and filling a glass.
14. Independently navigates wheelchair in familiar environments for which he has been conditioned.
15. Cognitive abilities are limited and difficult to assess.

## **CASE STUDY: JESSE**

1. A 14-year-old male who lives at home.
2. Is ambulatory and can navigate around school.
3. Has difficulty with speech—articulation.
4. Verbalizes likes and dislikes.
5. School program focuses on structured routines for daily living, some academics, and planned, practiced community-based experiences with pre-vocational/vocational component.
6. Changes clothes, including buttoning and zipping.
7. Does not finish personal care routine without prompting.
8. Is not responsible for self-administering medicine.
9. Helps with yard work, preparing meals, and cleaning up.
10. Would rather determine tasks than follow directions of others.
11. Is easily distracted by items and/or events.
12. Enjoys art class, computer games, and working on puzzles.
13. Cannot exchange money for goods and services.
14. Speaks in complete sentences, knows the names of all peers, and can apologize for unintentional mistakes.
15. Does not always follow common rules of behavior and often seeks one-on-one attention.

## **CASE STUDY: RON**

1. A 17-year-old high school student who lives with older brother (both parents deceased).
2. Has normal physical abilities and good physical health.
3. Attends high school program that emphasizes daily living routines and responsibilities.
4. Has driver's license and has had 3 accidents in two years.
5. Has ability to perform simple math functions (addition and subtraction) but uses calculator for multiplication and division applications.
6. Understands the function of money but does not always approach financial decisions in a realistic/practical manner.
7. Employed at local food store but has difficulty due to tendency toward excessive social interactions with customers.
8. Has many "girlfriends" but rarely interacts with them outside of school.
9. Sometimes needs reminders about proper attire in certain situations (e.g., work, school events, etc.).
10. Sometimes needs reminders about acceptable grooming and hygiene.
11. Plans to get married and live independently in an apartment after high school.
12. Plans to go to a large, local university but does not know what his course of study will be, where or how he will live, or how he will finance the schooling.
13. Has elderly neighborhood friend whom he helps with house and yard maintenance and sometimes accompanies to local park, shopping, and church functions.
14. Likes working with woodworking tools and has become highly skilled with certain operations.
15. Has had numerous conflicts with male peers and tends to react defensively in disruptive ways that often require adult intervention.

## **CASE STUDY: SUSAN**

1. A 16-year-old high school student.
2. Hearing impaired since age 6 with no functional hearing.
3. Is adept at reading lips and usually signs to those who understand and can sign back.
4. Needs certain accommodations in classroom settings (e.g., seating in front of classroom, sometimes requires translator to sign certain complex concepts).
5. Has limited ability to use verbal language and communication but continues to show improvement in speech articulation skills.
6. Advocates well for herself in social situations.
7. Has many acquaintances in school but tends to socialize with a small group of close friends in and out of school.
8. Has taken and scored high on state assessments (with accommodations for hearing disability).
9. Does well in all classes (consistently on honor roll) but excels in areas of social studies and history.
10. Intends to continue education at the university level hoping to study law.
11. Travels through school and community independently and is preparing to take driver's license test.
12. Handles personal care and hygiene independently.
13. Is patient when meeting new people who do not sign or acknowledge hearing difficulty.
14. Can be very creative with computer graphics and is often asked to design items for school groups (e.g., student council, yearbook, school paper, etc.).
15. Parents have expressed concern for her safety in situations that are new or involve being in a large crowd. (Parents don't feel she is sufficiently aware of risks in such situations.)